

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 CAIRO 16979

NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG, US, SC

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH FAHMY ON UN RESOLUTION

REF: (A) STATE 296629, (B) STATE 298498

SUMMARY: WENT THROUGH TALKING POINTS WITH FAHMY AND, AT HIS REQUEST, GAVE HIM COPY FOR USE WITH SADAT. REACTING NEGATIVELY, FAHMY CLAIMED HE HAD EXPECTED USG VOTE AGAINST EGYPTIAN RESOLUTION. OUR TALKING POINTS, WHICH HE CALLED FACTUALLY WRONG IN PLACES, ARE NO MORE THAN AN EXCUSE TO DO SO. ALTHOUGH HE PERSONALLY HAD INSISTED ON INCLUSION OF LATE MARCH DATE FOR RECONVENING OF GENEVA, EGYPTIAN PERMREP HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED "ACCOMMODATE" US ON UNSC ISSUE. HE CHALLENGED US FIND REFERENCE TO PLO IN EGYPTIAN DRAFT. GOE HAS NO DESIRE CROWD NEW ADMINISTRATION, BUT CONSIDERS IT ESSENTIAL TO FLAG PUBLICLY IMPORTANCE ARAB STATES ATTACH TO EARLY RESUMPTION OF GENEVA CONFERENCE. CITING ELECTIONS OR OTHER REASONS, ISRAELIS WILL TRY TO STALL AND USG WILL, BECAUSE OF ITS SINAI II COMMITMENT, GO ALONG. GOE HAS BEEN THROUGH ALL THIS BEFORE. HE CLAIMED RECENT ISRAELI PUBLIC UTTERANCES ARE MAINLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THRUST OF EGYPTIAN RESOLUTION. IN ANY CASE, ME DEBATE CANNOT END WITH NOTHING. REGARDLESS OF TEXT OF RESOLUTION, GOE CAN DETERMINE ARAB CONSENSUS ON

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WHEN GENEVA SHOULD BE RECONVENED. IF IT DEVELOPS

MARCH IS TOO SOON, DATE CAN BE SWITCHED TO APRIL IN LIGHT CONSULTATIONS WITH NEW ADMINISTRATION. FAHMY'S NEGATIVE REACTION COMPOUNDED BY REPORT HE HAD JUST RECEIVED FROM MOHAMED RIAD OF LATTER'S TALK WITH YOU. FAHMY SCOFFED THAT "COMMON STRATEGY," OF WHICH WE SPEAK, HAS NOT EXISTED FOR SOME TIME. I STRONGLY REFUTED THESE VARIOUS POINTS AND CONSTANTLY STRESSED NEED TO GIVE NEW ADMINISTRATION ADEQUATE TIME TO STUDY THE PROBLEM AND DETERMINE ITS OPTIONS. AT END OF OUR TALK, WHILE FAHMY WAS UNREPENTANT AND MADE IT CLEAR GOE WANTS VOTE TAKEN ON ITS RESOLUTION, HE DID INDICATE GOE HAS NO DESIRE TO FORCE NEW ADMINISTRATION TO HAVE TO TAKE PREMATURE DECISIONS ON ISSUES INHERENT IN ME CONFLICT. TIMING CAN BE WORKED OUT IN LIGHT FUTURE CONSULTATIONS WITH NEW ADMINISTRATION. END SUMMARY

1. HAVE JUST COME FROM A LONG MEETING WITH FAHMY DURING WHICH WE DISCUSSED THE EGYPTIAN UNGA RESOLUTION. I CAREFULLY WENT THROUGH THE TALKING POINTS AS REVISED BE REFTEL B AND, PURSUANT TO YOUR INTIAL INSTRUCTIONS, EMPHASIZED THAT THE ISSUE IS SUFFICIENTLY IMPORTANT THAT YOU WOULD APPRECIATE HIS CONVEYING YOUR VIEWS TO SADAT. FAHMY HAD NO ONE WITH HIM AND DID NOT HIMSELF TAKE NOTES. SINCE WE WANTED THE MATTER BE CONVEYED TO SADAT, HE ASKED THAT WE CONSIDER THE PRESENTATION AS AN ORAL MESSAGE AND ASKED FOR A COPY. I GAVE IT TO HIM TO AVOID ANY MISUNDERSTANDINGS.

2. FAHMY'S REACTION WAS NEGATIVE. HE VIEWED OUR DEMARCHE, WHICH HE CALLED FACTUALLY WRONG, AS NOTHING MORE THAN AN ATTEMPT TO JUSTIFY OUR VOTING AGAINST THE RESOLUTION. HE CLAIMED THAT HE HAD NEVER THOUGHT THAT WE WOULD VOTE FOR IT, NO MATTER HOW MUCH GOE MIGHT AGREE TO AMEND IT. HE CHARGED THIS ID DUE TO THE COMMITMENT THAT WE MADE TO ISRAEL DURING SINAI II, WHICH TIES OUR HANDS. WE SPEAK OF A "COMMON STRATEGY," BUT THERE HAS IN FACT BEE NO SUCH THING FOR SOME TIME. I INTERJECTED THAT HE WAS TOTALLY WRONG, BUT FAHMY CHARGED THAT ANY SUCH SECRET

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DENIAL IS SOPHISTRY.

3. AS HE WENT OVER THE POINTS AGAIN, HE BRISTLED SOME MORE. WHAT DID WE EXPECT TO COME OUT OF THE ME DEBAT--NOTHING? THIS IS WHAT THE ISRAELIS WANT, BUT GOE MUST ACT TO PROTECT ITS OWN INTERESTS. GOE HAD AT LEAST MADE AN EFFORT TO CONSULT WITH US IN WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK BEFORE PRESENTING ITS

RESOLUTION, WHICH IS MORE THAN ISRAEL HAD DONE WITH RESPECT TO ITS RESOLUTION. FAHMY CONTENDED THE EGYPTIAN RESOLUTION IS REASONABLE AND THAT HE HAD INSTRUCTED EGYPTIAN PERMREP ABDEL MEGUID TO "ACCOMMODATE" US ON THE PARAGRAPH THAT REQUESTS THE UNSC TO CONVENE SUBSEQUENT TO THE SUBMISSION BY THE SYG OF HIS REPORT ON THE ME SITUATION. HE HAD NOT HEARD WHETHER ABDEL MEGUID HAD DONE SO, BUT KNEW THAT EGYPTIAN PERMREP HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH AMBASSADOR SCRANTON. NOR DID HE KNOW WHAT THE REACTION OF THE OTHER ARAB AND NONALIGNED STATES MIGHT HAVE BEEN TO THE ELIMINATION OF THE UNSC LANGUAGE.

4. REGARDING THE PROVISION CALLING FOR RESUMPTION OF GENEVA NOT LATER THAN THE END OF MARCH, THIS HAD BEEN INSERTED AT FAHMY'S SPECIFIC INSTRUCTION. AS HAD BEEN MADE CLEAR TO THE VARIOUS CODELS AND THROUGH OTHER MEDIA, GOE BELIEVES THERE IS URGENCY TO RECONVENING GENEVA. HE CHARGED THAT WE DO NOT WANT GENEVA BECAUSE THE ISRAELIS REALLY DO NOT WANT IT, NOTWITHSTANDING SOME OF THEIR PUBLIC STATEMENTS TO THE CONTRARY. NOTING SECRETARY OF STATE DESIGNATE VANCE'S RECENT COMMENT THAT THE ME WILL BE GIVEN TOP PRIORITY, FAHMY ARGUED THAT TWO MONTHS SHOULD BE ENOUGH FOR THE ADMINISTRATION TO BE ABLE TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THE ISSUE. IN ANY CASE, HE, FAHMY, COULD CONTROL WHEN GENEVA MEETS. IF THE END OF MARCH IS TOO SOON, IT CAN MEET IN APRIL. BUT GOE FEELS IT ESSENTIAL TO FLAG PUBLICLY THE FACT THAT RECONVENING GENEVA IS URGENT. AT THIS POINT, HE REITERATED HIS COMPLAINT OF TWO DAYS AGO THAT OUR APPARENT INABILITY TO SETTLE THE EASTERN GULF OF SUEZ OIL DRILLING ISSUE HARDLY GIVES GOE ANY

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CONFIDENCE IN OUR WILLINGNESS OR ABILITY TO MOVE AHEAD ON THE FAR MORE COMPLEX OVERALL ME PROBLEM.

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 CAIRO 16979

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

5. I TOLD FAHMY THAT, AS HE WELL KNEW, THE OVERALL ME PROBLEM AND THE OIL DRILLING ISSUES ARE SEPARATE MATTERS. ON THE OIL DRILLING ISSUE, WE BELIEVE THAT THE FOUR POINTS WHICH YOU HAD WORKED OUT WITH ALLON OFFER A PRACTICAL WAY TO PROCEED WITHOUT DELAY. ON THE OVERALL ME PEACE SETTLEMENT, HE KNEW FULL WELL THAT WE SHARE THE GOE VIEW THAT A RESUMPTION OF THE PEACE PROCESS IS URGENT. HOWEVER, SPECIFYING A MARCH DATE FOR THE RESUMPTION OF GENEVA, AS THE EGYPTIAN RESOLUTION DOES, IS HARDLY HELPFUL AND COULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. THE NEW ADMINISTRATION MUST BE GIVEN ADEQUATE OPPORTUNITY TO ACQUAINT ITSELF WITH THE PROBLEM AND TO MAKE A JUDGMENT ON HOW BEST TO PROCEED. AS BOTH PRESIDENT SADAT AND HE HAD EARLIER AGREED, THE NEW ADMINISTRATION SHOULD NOT BE CROWDED INTO HAVING TO TAKE POSITIONS BEFORE IT HAS HAD A CHANCE TO STUDY THE MATTER. I RECALLED SADAT HAD TOLD CODEL RIBICOFF THAT, WHILE HE WANTED GENEVA TO BE RECONVENED ASAP, HE WOULD BE SATISFIED IF RECONVENING TAKES PLACE IN LATE SPRING.

6. FAHMY RETORTED THAT ISRAEL'S POSITIONS, AS EXPRESSED BY RAIN, PERES AND ALLON IN THEIR MANY RECENT PUBLIC UTTERANCES, MAKE IT NECESSARY FOR EGYPT TO SPELL OUT AN EARLY DATE. GOE HAS BEEN THROUGH THE DIPLOMATIC PROCRASTINATION PROCESS BEFORE. ALREADY THE ISRAELIS ARE TALKING ABOUT MOVING UP THEIR ELECTIONS

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FROM OCTOBER. IF THEY DO SO, GO WILL THEN BE TOLD BY USG THAT NOTHING CAN BE DONE UNTIL THE ISRAELI ELECTIONS ARE OVER. THEREAFTER, THE ISRAELIS WILL FIND SOME OTHER EXCUSE TO DELAY AND USG WILL GO ALONG WITH IT. IN 1978, OUR CONGRESSIONAL BY-ELECTIONS COME AND SO ON. THE PEACE PROCESS, FAHMY ASSERTED, WILL BE INDEFINITELY STALLED UNLESS SOMETHING IS

DONE TO BREAK OUT OF THIS EXPECTED SEQUENCE OF REASONS FOR DELAY. IT IS ALWAYS THE SAME STORY, FAHMY CONTINUED. RABIN IS TOO WEAK TO NEGOTIATE. THE NEW ADMINISTRATION AND THE WORLD MUST UNDERSTAND THAT EGYPT AND THE ARAB WORLD REGARD RESUMPTION OF GENEVA AS CRITICAL AND URGENT. IT IS AS SIMPLE AS THAT, FAHMY ASSERTED.

7. I TOLD FAHMY THAT THE WEAKNESS OF THE ISRAELI LABOR GOVERNMENT ALIGNMENT IS A FACT OF LIFE, WHICH WE HAVE ALL RECOGNIZED--HE AND SADAT INCLUDED, BUT THAT THIS IN NO WAY DIMINISHES OUR BELIEF THAT THE PEACE PROCESS MUST BE RESUMED AS SPEEDILY AS POSSIBLE. THE POINT THAT I WAS TRYING TO GET HIM TO UNDERSTAND, AND WHICH HE PERSISTED IN DOWNGRADING, WAS THE NEED TO GIVE THE NEW ADMINISTRATION ADEQUATE OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY THE PROBLEM AND TO CONSIDER ITS OPTIONS. FAHMY CLAIMED THAT HE ALRADY KNEW THE OPTIONS THE NEW ADMINISTRATION IS CONSIDERING, BUT DID NOT ELABORATE.

8. SEIZING UPON OUR POINT THAT THE UNGA REQUEST THE SYG TO RESUME CONTACTS WITH THE PLO AS A PARTY TO THE CONFLICT IN PREPARATION FOR RESUMPTION OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, FAHMY SAID WE HAD OBVIOUSLY NOT READ THE LANGUAGE OF THE EGYPTIAN RESOLUTION. THERE IS NO REFERENCE IN IT TO THE PLO. HOWEVER, AS WE CERTAINLY KNEW, THE SYG HAS ALREADY COMMUNICATED WITH THE PLO ASKING ITS THOUGHTS ON THE SUBJECT. AT ONE POINT FAHMY OPINED THE PLO HAS ALREADY RESPONDED, BUT SUBSEQUENTLY COMMENTED THAT THE PLO IS CURRENTLY IN SUCH DISARRAY THAT IT MIGHT NOT YET HAVE DONE SO. BUT POINTS HE WISHED TO STRESS WER THAT THE SYG HAS ALREADY BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE PLO AND THAT THE SECRET

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EGYPTIAN RESOLUTION MAKES NO SPECIFIC MENTION OF THE PLO. EGYPTIAN WORDING HAD BEEN SO CAST IN DEFERENCE TO USG CONCERNS AND TO ALLOW MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY. HE REITERATED HIS EARLIER CHARGE THAT WE ARE SIMPLY SEEKING A PRETEXT TO VOTE AGAINST THE RESOLUTION AND ARE DISTORTING THE LANGUAGE AND PURPOSE OF THE EGYPTIAN DRAFT IN ORDER TO DO SO.

9. I CATEGORICALLY DENIED ANY EFFORT ON OUR PART TO DISTORT THE EGYPTIAN RESOLUTION OR THAT WE WERE SIMPLY SEEKING A PRETEXT TO VOTE AGAINST IT. WE HAD WEIGHED THE MATTER CAREFULLY IN THE LIGHT OF THE PRESENT TRANSITION PERIOD AND THE NEED TO GIVE THE NEW ADMINISTRATION ADEQUATE OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY THE

PROBLEM. AS FAHMY SHOULD KNOW, IT WILL HARDLY BE HELPFUL TO THE NEW ADMINISTRATION TO HAVE TO COPE WITH THE DIVISIVE ISSUES THAT CHARACTERIZE UNSC MEETINGS AND FORCE IT TO TAKE SIDES ON CONTENTIOUS ISSUES IN THAT FORUM. DOING SO WILL ONLY LIMIT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION'S CAPACITY TO MOVE IN CONSTRUCTIVE WAYS OUTSIDE THE COUNCIL. AS WE HAD FREQUENTLY DISCUSSED IN THE PAST YEAR, AND AS HE HAD AGREED, THE UNSC IS NOT A SUITABLE FORUM FOR THE MEANINGFUL GIVE AND TAKE THAT IS NEEDED FOR A SUCCESSFUL PEACE PROCESS.

10. FAHMY SAID HE HAD NO DESIRE TO PROD THE NEW ADMINISTRATION, BUT THE URGENCY THAT GOE ATTACHES TO AN EXPEDITIOUS RESUMPTION OF THE LONG STALLED GENEVA CONFERENCE HAD TO BE FLAGGED. AS SADAT AND HE HAD TOLD THE CODELS, GOE WANTS PEACE AND HAS BEEN PATIENT. HOWEVER, DESPITE ALL POLITICAL OBSTACLES, THERE MUST SOON BE MOVEMENT UNLESS THE ME SITUATION IS TO DETERIORATE. IN THAT SENSE, THE EGYPTIAN RESOLUTION WAS PART OF THE "PEACE OFFENSIVE" WHICH SADAT AND HE HAD BEGUN WITH THE CODELS. THE EGYPTIAN RESOLUTION WILL HAVE TO BE PUT TO A VOTE. NO MATTER HOW IT COMES OUT, AND H HOPED USG WILL AT LEAST ABSTAIN, HE ARGUED THAT SO FARAS THE ARAB STATES ARE CONCRND, EGYPT CAN DETERMINE THE OPTIMUM TIMING FOR RESUMPTION OF GENEVA IN THE LIGHT OF ITS FUTURE CONSULTATIONS WITH THE NEW ADMINISTRATION.

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11. AS YOU CAN SEE FROM THE ABOVE FAHMY DID NOT TAKE KINDLY TO OUR DEMARCHE. HE HAD JUST HAD A BRIFING FROM MOHAMED RIAD ABOUT THE LATTER'S TALK WITH YOU AND WAS VISIBLY ANNOYED ABOUT SOME OF THE THINGS YOU ALLEGEDLY SAID TO RIAD. AS YOU KNOW, HE IS HYPERSENSITIVE AND QUICKLY TENDS TO READ INTO THINGS AN EFFORT TO DICTATE GO'S FOREIGN POLICY. I REPEATEDLY EMPHASIZED TO HIM THAT THERE HAS NEVER BEEN SUCH INTENTION.

12. I DO NOT KNOW THE CURRENT STATE OF PLAY IN NEW YORK, BUT IF HE IS RIGHT ABOUT TH FACTUAL ELEMENTS OF THE EGYPTIAN RESOLUTION IN ITS PRESENT FORM (AND HE SHOWED ME THE EGYPTIAN TEXT), OUR DEMARCHE WAS SOMEWHAT VULNERABLE ON THIS SCORE. ALTHOUGH HE WAS BRISTLING AT THE BEGINNING OF OUR TALK, I HAD CALMED HIM DOWN BY TH TIME WE FINISHED (HE IN FACT KEPT ANOTHER AMBASSADOR WAITING ONE HALF HOUR UNTIL WE FINISHED). I THINK HE UNDERSTANDS THE NED TO ALLOW THE NEW ADMINISTRATION TIME TO STUDY THE

PROBLEM AND DETERMINE ITS OPTIONS, BUT FAHMY WILL
NEVER CHANGE. HE IS FIRST AND FOREMOST GIVEN TO
WHAT SADAT LIKES TO CALL "POLITICAL AUCTIONEERING".
HE IS CONVINCED THAT SINAI II RESULTED IN A
COMMITMENT TO THE ISRAELIS WHICH HAS TIED OUR HANDS
AND WOULD LIKE SOMEHOW TO PERSUADE THE NEW ADMINISTRATION
THAT IT MUST BREAK OUT OF ANY SUCH CONSTRAINTS.
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